GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:930
ANSWERED ON:04.12.2015
Welfare of Media Persons
Choudhary Col. (Retd) Sona Ram;Patle Smt. Kamla Devi

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has implemented/proposes to implement any welfare schemes for electronic and print media persons;

(b) if so, the details of each such scheme and the monitoring mechanism for their effective implementation including the fund earmarked/utilized for the purpose during each of the last three years and the current year, State/UT-wise and media-wise;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the other steps being taken by the Government for the welfare of employees, journalist, editors, writers working with media?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING [(COL RAJYAVARDHAN RATHORE (Retd.)]

(a) & (b): The welfare schemes for electronic and print media persons implemented by the Government of India are: -

(i) Assistance under Journalists Welfare Scheme (JWS) to provide one time ex-gratia relief on urgent basis to journalists and their families on account of death, permanent disability, cost of treatment of major ailments and also in case of accidents causing serious injuries necessitating hospitalization. For seeking financial assistance under this Scheme, journalist/family have to apply in the prescribed form and forward it to Director General: Press Information Bureau (PIB). Thereafter, DG, PIB examine the matter and if the matter fulfills the conditions of JWS, DG along with his specific recommendations and necessary documents, forward it to the Committee constituted for administering the JWS for consideration. The Committee takes a decision after considering the recommendations and thereafter the matter is submitted for the approval of Minister of Information & Broadcasting for releasing the financial assistance. The funds allocated under JWS and the expenditure incurred during the last three years and the current year are given below:

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Financial Year Allocated Fund (Rs.) Expenditure (Rs.)
2012-13 20,00,000/- 10,00,000/-
2013-14 30,00,000/ 6,00,000/-
2014-15 30,00,000/ 22,46,272/-
2015-16 till date 15,00,000/ 15,00,000/-

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State/Union Territory wise and media-wise information has not been maintained.

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(ii) Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS) facilities are being provided to PIB accredited media persons. They are entitled to OPD facilities and medicines from CGHS dispensary and inpatient medical facilities at Dr. RML Hospital, New Delhi. However, OPD treatment is not permitted in private empanelled hospitals. For indoor treatment, journalists can obtain treatment at any of the CGHS empanelled private hospital on the basis of CGHS card issued and the hospitals are to charge at CGHS rates for the facilities for which they are empanelled.

(iii) As a measure for journalists" welfare, the journalists are allotted Government accommodation under "Press Pool" for a specified limited period. The Guidelines for allotment of accommodation under Press Pool have been formulated by Directorate of Estates, M/o Urban Development. As per the extant guidelines, there are 100 dwelling units under Press Pool for allotment to the media persons. The press persons have been categorized into two categories on the basis of their monthly emoluments, viz.

? those drawing emoluments upto Rs.20,000/- under Category-I
? those drawing between Rs.20,001/- to 40,000/- under Category-II.

Journalists under Category-I are allotted Type-IV Government accommodation for normal period of allotment of 5 years and those under Category-II get Type-IV Spl. accommodation for 3 years.

As per the guidelines, a Screening Committee under the chairpersonship of Director General, PIB and comprising of 4 journalists/cameramen and one official each from M/o Urban Development and Directorate of Estates, considers the applications received from the journalists and recommends the names to Dtte. of Estates for allotment of Govt. accommodation. The guidelines also provide that the Screening Committee will have tenure of two years from the date of its first meeting and will be reconstituted every two years.

(iv) Concession on rail fares is admissible to Press Correspondents accredited to Headquarters of Government of India, State Governments, Union Territories and Districts for unlimited travel on bonafide press work. The element of concession is 50% in all classes in basic fares of Mail/Express/Rajdhani/Shatabdi/Jan Shatabdi Trains to Press Correspondents for unlimited travel on bonafide press work. Same element of concession is also admissible to spouse/dependent children/companion of the accredited Press Correspondent while travelling with him/her twice in every financial year from the station serving the headquarters to any place and back.

Wage Boards are constituted under section 9 and 13C of the Working Journalists & Other Newspaper Employees (Conditions of Service) and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1955, administered by M/o Labour & Employment, for the purpose of fixing or revising the rates of wages in respect of journalists and non-journalist newspaper employees for print media only. The Government has constituted six Wage Boards for the newspaper employees till now. The last Wage Board constituted by the Government has submitted its report on 31st December, 2010 and its recommendations were notified on 11th November, 2011.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) At present, no such proposal is under consideration with the Government of India.

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